



BOARD OF VISITORS

THE VIRGINIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

P.O. BOX 2069

STAUNTON, VA 24402-2069

Senator Emmett W. Hanger, Jr.
Board Chairman

September , 2015

Minutes of Meeting

Call to Order: Senator Hanger called the meeting to order at 10:43 a.m.

Roll Call of Members: Members present: Senator Emmett Hanger, Delegate Dickie Bell, Delegate Tony Wilt, John Pleasants, Mike Asip, Ann Latham-Anderson, and Paula Johnson

Members absent: Senator Barbara Favola, Alice Frick Virgil Cook, Judy Sorrell

Advisors to BOV: Wanda Council, VDOE; Wendell Roberts, AAG; Mona Siddiqui, AAG; Pat Trice, Superintendent

Senator Hanger declared a quorum.

Reading and Approval of June 19, 2015 meeting Minutes - Delegate Wilt questioned the need for a statement regarding the Board's coming out of the closed session. John Pleasants moved to adopt the June 2015 minutes with the noted correction to be made to the minutes. The motion passed.

Reports

Superintendent's Report: Pat Trice presented updates on the school, outreach services, and the VSDB Foundation Board. The opening of the school year has been busy and has gone well. There are 97 students enrolled (63 deaf and 34 blind). Some procedures are being reestablished to put practices in line with public school procedures and best practices. By working with the Attorney General's office, both the student and employee handbooks were revised. Both handbooks will be on the VSDB Website.

The high school in both departments has shifted to block scheduling this year with administrative staff continuing to look at programming challenges. The week of September 21 is Deaf Awareness Week with scheduled skits and presentations taking place on campus. Benchmark testing is scheduled. The girls' volleyball team will travel to Kentucky for the Mason-Dixon tournament in October. The middle-school cross country team will host a meet on campus on September 30th. In cooperation with Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation, Career, Career Day will take place in October.

Pat will meet with the Redefining VSDB Committee in October to review barriers of some of the proposed changes. For example, three blind students are taking Virtual Virginia classes but are

having difficulty gaining full access. However, the Virtual Virginia on-line coursework does not align and work with the JAWS program.

The Department of Education recently granted \$150,000 to VSDB to be spent on needed supplies and equipment to meet the needs of programs and services in an effort to move VSDB forward. A portion of this money was used to buy supplies needed to set up independent living apartments in Price Hall. This pilot program will allow VSDB students to stay independently in the apartments for one semester. The potential for other LEAs to send students to participate in the Price Hall Apartments and attend VSDB for a semester may be established, with the LEAs paying tuition to VSDB for students to stay in an apartment and attend VSDB for one semester. The DOE money was also used to buy inventory for a mobile store, to be used as an on-site job program. Students will learn to set up inventory, calculate sales tax, etc., for school functions and sporting events. In addition, a computer and software will be purchased and used to establish a graphics art lab. This will support workforce skills as well as a potential on-site job experience.

VSDB's Website is being revised and updated. Pat will post quarterly video updates that will be accessible for both the deaf and the blind population and contain captions, signing and voice. Pat will request the Foundation Board to fund the cost of these videos.

Secretary of Education, Anne Holton, is scheduled to visit the campus in the mid October. She will have the opportunity to tour the campus and talk to students and staff.

Main Hall will be vacated by the end of November when preliminary work will begin for renovations as funding and plan approval continue to be worked out. Future Board of Visitors meetings will be held in the Chapel.

Pat reported that Debbie Pfeiffer, Outreach Director, is working on parent resource and staff videos, deaf culture videos, and sign language class videos with all being produced to post on the VSDB Website. Family ASL classes are scheduled to begin in October. Debbie is participating in Wednesday Webinars in addition to campus training including a recent Fairview Reading workshop for VSDB staff and teachers from 16 LEAs. Debbie continues to work through the Department of Education to publicize outreach events.

The Foundation Board's grant writer is doing an excellent job obtaining grants. Some grants are specifically earmarked for the CROPS program. The VSDB/Alleghany Mountain Institute Fundraiser was successful, with 120 tickets sold. The net amount of \$8,000 will be split between the VSDB Foundation Board and the Alleghany Mountain Institute. Next year's farm-to-table event will be planned to accommodate 200 attendees.

Budget and Grants: Janice Rankin, Director of Operations, reported that the budget is even at 17% partly because of the \$150,000 from DOE which helped to maintain the budget.

Two decision packets are ready to be submitted to the State. The first package, \$160,300, will cover the cost of buying additional maintenance equipment and lawn mowers. The second package request of \$326,747 will cover the cost of paying out teacher and 10-month employee contracts because of changes in the 2016-2017 school year calendar. The surrounding public

school divisions will open the 2016-2017 school year in early August. VSDB will align its calendar with the local divisions' calendar; therefore, VSDB will need to pay out teacher contracts for the 2015-16 school year because of the teachers and 10-month staff needing to return in late July 2016.

Delegate Wilt suggested giving faculty and 10-month employees a "heads-up" on this payout with the possibility of bumping the employee up to another tax bracket.

Delegate Bell moved to approve the two budget requests. The motion passed.

Human Resources: Nate McLamb, Director of Human Resources, gave a brief background presentation on the 17 new academic employees. Keith Van Fossen was appointed principal in July. Consequently, other staff shifted in their positions. A school psychologist is working on a contract basis. Three vacancies will be filled with 31 positions not to be filled because of budget restraints.

Motion to Enter Closed Session

Delegate Wilt moved that the Board of Visitors of the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind convene in closed session to discuss matters related to scholastic records of a former VSDB student pursuant to the scholastic records exemption at §2.2-3711(A)(2) of the Code of Virginia and for a discussion related to the evaluation of specific personnel pursuant to §2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia.

Delegate Wilt moved that the board go into closed session with Mike Asip seconding the motion.

Immediately upon adjournment of Closed Session the Board of Visitors adopted the following resolution.

WHEREAS, the Board of Visitors of the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind has this day adjourned into Closed Session in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and WHEREAS, the Virginia Freedom of Information Act provides for certification that such Closed Session was conducted in conformity with the law. NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors hereby certify that to the best of each member's knowledge:

- (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting in which this certification resolution applies, and
- (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed session were heard, discussed, or considered by the Board of Visitors.

The Board of Visitors being polled, the vote was as follows:

- 1) Senator Hanger: Aye
- 2) Delegate Bell: Aye
- 3) Delegate Wilt: Aye
- 4) John Pleasants: Aye
- 5) Mike Asip: Aye

- 6) Ann Latham-Anderson: Aye
- 7) Paula Johnson: Aye

Continuing Business

Wendell Roberts gave a Power Point presentation on the Board of Visitors being the policy makers in establishing rules, policies and regulations for governance of VSDB. (§22.1-246.2) Current policies should be accessible to VSDB staff and students via the Website. The process to review and update policies has begun. The VSDB Website currently has two policies-- *Performance Planning and Evaluation* and *Student Records*--accessible to parents, students, and the public.

Board members should review a group of policies distributed at each quarterly meeting and be prepared to comment on and act on at the next board meeting. A new set of policies will be given at the December meeting for members to look over and act on at the March meeting. Policies have been prepared by VSDB staff along with input from the Attorney General's office.

Mona Siddique with the Attorney General's office briefly explained the *Admissions* (S001) and *Discharge* (S020) policies. Senator Hanger questioned #7 under the "Change in Placement" section (VSDB Ceases Operation) in the *Discharge* policy. Wendell will investigate this reason and clarify it at the next meeting.

The Board discussed and gave provisional approval to policies *Title IX-Discrimination* (G036), *Admissions* (S001) and *Discharge* (S020).

Wendell discussed the Title IX policy which has been driven by the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, which has put out guidance through Title IX with policies updated and enforced nationwide. The Title IX policy has been upgraded with the designation of Title IX coordinators at VSDB. The Title IX Coordinator contact information will be posted on the VSDB Website along with the new grievance policy, how grievance is investigated and how the grievance will be communicated. The Title IX coordinator is available in person or by email. Because VSDB is a residential school, Wendell will see how colleges handle complaints 24 hours a day. Delegate Wilt pointed out that the term "gender identification" was not identified consistently in the policy. Final revisions will be made to correct that omission prior to posting the policy.

Wendell asked for provisional approval of the three policies presented at the meeting with final approval in December to act in accordance with provisional approval if something happens in the interim before the December board meeting. Wendell stated that provisional approval puts the school in a better position than if there were no approval.

Delegate Wilt moved to approve the three policies provisionally. After discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Nearly all repair from flood damage in the Yates-Shinpaugh Education building is complete. Carpet tiles need to be replaced. Work should be finished by the end of the year.

New Business

No new business was presented.

Public Comment

Rachel Bavister addressed the Board stating that she would like to pursue the possibility of getting the Code of Virginia changed so that VSDB could be set up as “parent choice” placement as opposed to going through the LEA for referral. She is asking the Virginia Association of the Deaf to look at the Code of Virginia to campaign for the changes.

Darlene Coleman, behavior specialist and VEA representative for the residential program, addressed concerns regarding the lower number of residential students. Residential staff is concerned about future layoffs because of the decline in residential students. She asked the Board to consider any strategies or suggestions to support the residential program.

Senator Hanger addressed the Outreach program and how it could affect the residential program. Primary issues are getting programs that will attract students to VSDB, and filling that niche that other LEAs cannot meet.

Debbie Burns, retired VSDB employee, also spoke in support of Ms. Bavister’s comments.

Senator Hanger indicated that legislation was set up for LEAs to inform parents of VSDB programs. Information should be posted on LEA websites. Information on VSDB is available through the Virginia DBVI and VDDHH.

Delegate Wilt asked what practical steps could be taken to get VSDB information out to parents. Once the new programs have been established, the VSDB Foundation could fund advertising them. Pat pointed out that parents also are informed through the TEMP program.

Members suggested scheduling a block of time at the December board meeting to discuss the parent choice option and look at numbers and how to create awareness to parents and students. Senator Hanger asked Wanda Council to provide statistics on the outcome of students educated through the LEA as opposed to VSDB. In addition, the Board would like a review of the Master Plan for our campus and an update on status of buildings as well as a campus tour if weather permits.

The next Board of Visitors meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 9, 2015 from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Adjournment

Senator Hanger moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed.

Virgil A. Cook, Board Secretary